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# JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

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## EDITORIAL NOTE

A word of explanation is due to members on the contents of this issue, which is devoted almost entirely to correspondence and reviews.

First, an unusually large number of letters has been received (though space cannot be found for all of them); secondly, reports have been prepared of several cases whose interest requires that no restriction be placed on their circulation; thirdly, reviews of a number of books have already been held over for several months; and lastly, the shortage of paper places a strict limitation on the length of the *Journal*. Correspondence and book reviews are therefore brought up to date in this number, and the next will be a 'public' number in which no letters will be printed. It is possible that a further public number may be issued before the end of the year.

The Editor would like to take this opportunity of asking correspondents to keep their letters as short as possible.

## CORRESPONDENCE

## THE REACH OF THE MIND

*Some Comments on Dr Soal's Review*

SIR,—I am amazed that the review of *The Reach of the Mind* in the *Journal* for February 1948 could be written by one who has made such brilliant contribution to the experimental literature of E.S.P., and that it should appear in the *Journal* of the Society whose honourable history establishes the claim of the British to a position of pre-eminence in the new science of the human mind.

I will not engage in a point-by-point discussion of this review. The book can speak for itself and certainly not one of our members will wish to miss it. Nor will I argue the reviewer's interpretation of the early history of the Duke work, although I am familiar in some detail with that history and I disagree with his interpretation. I would like to attempt something more constructive than rebuttal. The reviewer asks several questions, and these with profit might be answered.

At first glance it is curiously suggestive that there have been no high scoring subjects reported in recent years. Upon further thought it is entirely reasonable. The high score results obtained in the 1930's have not been duplicated in the present decade for at least these reasons: the search for outstanding subjects has not been a primary objective and success in simple card-calling experiments has not been even a secondary objective among the senior workers in the U.S.A. since before the war. After the symposium on E.S.P. held by the American Psychological Association in 1938 at which there was no effective criticism of the well done experiments, it became clear that mere card-calling could not convince most psychologists of the reality of E.S.P. Card-calling experiments demonstrate an anomaly in nature, and few psychologists will accept an anomaly of such momentous implications. It was decided then that future effort should be devoted to *learning* about psi and not to *proving* its existence.

In his 1942 presidential address Professor R. H. Thouless expressed this point of view with admirable lucidity. 'If we meet with sceptics . . . let us . . . not succumb to the temptation of trying to satisfy them ourselves. . . . The methods appropriate to a research intended to establish the reality of the phenomena are not generally appropriate to a research intended to elucidate the character and conditions of the phenomena. . . . Workers must be content with such moderate standards of significance as are used in other branches of scientific research, since the time available for any course of experiments is limited.'

The second question which I have taken from this review of *The Reach of the Mind* is one which interests me as a physicist. Why can a falling die be more easily influenced than a delicately balanced needle? Granting tentatively the reviewer's premise, one can speculate as to the answer. In the light of our knowledge of physics it seems entirely proper that a tumbling die should be more sensitive than a balanced needle. The d



may be presumed to pass through a number of metastable situations wherein the energy required to choose between alternative paths in the causative chain is very tiny. Physical energy comes in packets of minute but finite size. One quantum of electromagnetic energy, properly timed and aimed, could thus conceivably govern the final position of a die; whereas even a million quanta would be utterly insignificant when applied to a needle. The difference between these situations can be made clear by analogy. The hand of one man on the throttle of a train can control it easily. The same man pushing or pulling from behind would never be noticed.

The reviewer's third question is of a different nature. He says is it 'really credible' that one-out-of-three of the inmates of a school for the blind should score significantly above chance. This question is important, not for its own sake, but for the thought which lies behind it. In modern physics we no longer say 'Is it credible?' Since Einstein's special theory of relativity we have come to realise that our intuition is of no value in assessing reality. The only question which can rightly be asked is 'Has it been observed?'

The reviewer accepts telepathy but not PK. This acceptance of one phenomenon and rejection of another on what appears to be no better basis than personal preference is mystifying to me. I do not understand the type of mind which is bold enough to defy orthodox science by accepting telepathy and yet is so timid as to deny psychokinesis when the evidence for the latter is rather better than for the former.

I think the explanation for much of what has been written in this review is to be found in the reviewer's own words: 'It is of course extremely difficult for an Englishman who has had no personal contact with any of the experimenters or witnessed any of the experiments to form a sound estimate of the true value of the vast volume of research that has been turned out by Duke University and other U.S.A. institutions during the past fifteen years.'

I would like to endorse the suggestion made recently by Professor C. D. Broad that some way be found to bring about an exchange of personnel between England and the United States. In this way experimenters will come to appreciate the importance of the psychological milieu in psi research. I would hope, too, that among the experimenters coming to this country there would be a few young graduate students of psychology. Their training in psychology would permit them to understand the subtle nature of the human mind, and their youth might allow them to appreciate the importance of the working conditions at Duke—for above all, in my visits to Durham I have been impressed by the youthful atmosphere of Dr Rhine's laboratory.

Yours etc.,

ROBERT A. MCCONNELL

*Department of Physics,*  
University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

## RESULT OF THE PRIZE OFFER TO PHYSICAL MEDIUMS

SIR,—In the issue of the *Journal* for May I find a number of remarkable letters and, if I may be permitted to do so, I should like to offer a few observations. Dr Bendit starts off by saying that there are in fact very few, if any, mediums in this country who can produce genuine physical phenomena. How can he know this? How many has he investigated? Indeed, has he seriously investigated any of them? He then goes on to attack the conditions under which the prize offered was made and the report of the result in the January *Journal*. He thinks that the mediums who refused to be investigated may have shown more understanding of psychic matters than the investigator. They may, he says, be using common sense in refusing in some cases to be 'lured into a completely false position'. But, Sir, since, according to Dr Bendit there are few if any genuine physical mediums at all in this country, is it not just possible that this may be the reason for the refusals, and not all the fancy reasons that Dr Bendit has produced?

It is to be regretted that Dr Bendit does not agree with the Society's intention to study hypnotism. It is, however, one of the phenomena that the Society examined very early and I suggest he looks up page 3 of Vol. I of our *Proceedings*.

Mrs Richmond's knowledge is even more surprising than that of Dr Bendit. He knows that nearly all physical mediums are frauds. She knows what is going on in Dr West's 'unconscious'. 'Nothing happens when certain 'Research Officers' are present. Really! Dr West and I must have been badly hallucinated. I have seen nearly all the so-called physical phenomena: Dr West has naturally seen less. But as it appears that through our unconscious processes there are no 'results', I can only suppose that Mrs Richmond means genuine psychic phenomena. In other words she agrees with Dr Bendit that the mediums are frauds and that all the phenomena we have seen are spurious. Or is it about to be suggested that Dr West's unconscious is so active that genuine mediums are transformed into arrant frauds the moment he enters the séance room or that my 'telepathic' influence when not even in the room is able to send them running to the theatrical houses to buy the false beards, a specimen of which Brigadier Firebrace picked up the other day shortly after I had admired the full forms that wheezed and squeaked in front of me time and again?

It is not, I think, that members are getting 'fed up' (to use Mrs Richmond's phrase) with our admirable and open-minded Research Officer. It is rather with those who seem to be out of touch with the Society's aims and methods but who remain within it and, as it seems to me, hinder, obstruct, and even sabotage its work, discredit its officials and make it ridiculous in the eyes of other scientific men who are not acquainted with the internal controversies which must always be present in work such as ours.

In conclusion I must say that the letter of Drs Thouless and Wiesner is as mysterious to me as it is to Mrs Goldney. They say that Mrs Goldney's rules would close the mind of the psychical researcher whereas a 'true mental discipline' would keep it open. And then a few lines



lower down (p. 237) they say that common sense must be used. If I understand her rightly that is just what Mrs Goldney has been saying. If we four go to a show and see chosen cards rise at command from a glass tumbler of course we cannot be *certain* in one sense that paranormal forces are not at work. When I drive in a car with Marion of course I cannot be *certain* that, as in the case of Mrs Silbert, it is not psychic power propelling the vehicle but merely spirit from the pump. Are we really to assume (as the letter suggests) that, whenever Drs Thouless and Wiesner see an effect they cannot explain, their open minds will compel them to suspend judgment and thus open the way to an 'investigation' of the 'phenomenon'? I was recently assured that this was in fact the proper attitude by a gentleman I met in the Society's Rooms. I wish I could dwell in the kind of world in which some of our members seem to pass their time. It must be like living in fairyland.

Yours etc.,

E. J. DINGWALL

SIR,—I feel, with Dr West's reply to my last letter to you, that we are getting somewhere in tracing out the reasons for the monotonous and Molotovian negativeness in the reports of investigations of various mediums and phenomena. Mrs Richmond's letter says a lot more than I was myself prepared to say at the time. Her contention is, moreover, borne out by Dr West's letter, which shows in one or two particular instances a desire rather to score a rhetorical point—i.e. an emotional one—than to be strictly impartial and scientific. Of this he is no doubt unconscious, but in the interests of our research work, I must ask him to answer them.

First: in my letter I mentioned Dr William Brown's views on hypnosis as those with which I myself agreed. Dr West makes it appear that I therefore think Dr William Brown a suitable person for psychical research. Will he please explain the connection? It may be my unconscious resistance to seeing it, but it seems decidedly far-fetched.

Second: Dr West speaks of 'the numerous physical mediums who give séances in London and in spiritualist circles', and asks whether I think them frauds because I said that very few mediums were able to produce physical phenomena. Am I to take it that Dr West knows of, or believes, that there are these 'many physical mediums' producing phenomena? If so, I shall value his assistance in showing them to me, and I will gladly take my statement back if I am satisfied with what I see. But if they do indeed exist, then I am entitled to ask him, as the Society's Research Officer (a) whether he has actually seen such phenomena? (b) if so, why he has not told of them and varied the tone of his reports with them? or (c) if he thinks them worth investigating, why he has not done so? I think the answer is that, in actual fact he agrees with my view, but could not resist the temptation to turn my negative statement into a positive accusation of fraud.

There are a number of other points on which I definitely join issue with Dr West. He says, for example, that one would have to look a long way before obtaining confirmation of my views on hypnosis. But it is not going very far afield to look up Dr William Brown's *Psychological*

*Methods of Healing.* And if Dr West were better acquainted with some of the really experienced members of the psychiatric fraternity, he would find that there are others besides myself who, directly or indirectly, share my view. This is, that hypnosis is bad for the subject undergoing it even where this bad effect is designed to lead to a good result. Yes, there is a vast literature on hypnosis. It would be worth Dr West's trouble to study the subject carefully before embarking on his experiments. He will find there that, in general terms, the best subjects for hypnosis are actual or potential hysterics. And it is the merest common sense to suggest that the very people who are hypnotisable are the ones who should most decidedly not be hypnotised.

Incidentally, the fact that others do hypnotic experiments does not justify the method. The fact that they have bullfights in Spain does not make them any more humane. The fact that many people drink alcohol does not eliminate the fact that the misuse of alcohol results in poisoning. And if one seeks to justify oneself by pointing out that others too do a wrong thing, one must logically allow that the methods used in Maltby, Hausen, Belsen and Dachau are scientifically ethical because they have been used in the name of science.

Moreover, if Dr West knew the literature of psychiatry better, he would not tell us of the wonders which hypnosis has taught us. The fact of the matter is that though in early days we learned a certain amount, for the last twenty years or more hypnosis has taught psychiatry virtually nothing at all. It is surely time to drop a method of experiment which has lost its value and is archaic, quite apart from any bad effects on its victims.

Then on the matter of the laboratory. It is all very well for Dr West airily to dismiss the subtle factors which in my opinion inhibit the production of phenomena. But, with the experience of twenty years as a psychotherapist, and more as a human being, I suggest that in any human contact these subtle factors operate. All the more so do they become important when dealing with psi and its manifestations. And it is not the conscious which counts. The unconscious is perhaps more important than external comfort, or the charm of the operator. Dr Rhine realises this; hence, perhaps, his positive results where others have failed. That is why I suggest that psychical researchers require a high degree of self-awareness to succeed. That this may be attained by some form of analysis is well known. There are, of course, failures in analysis; we always have to cope with those who are either incapable or unwilling to learn to see themselves as they are (a thing far more devastating even in its early stages, than seeing ourselves as others see us).

It amounts to this: the personal factor is of even greater importance in psychical research than in most other fields. A worker may be consciously anxious to obtain results, but his unconscious mind may put insuperable obstacles in the way, either from direct resistance to the subject under consideration or simply because it is disgruntled and inharmonious in a more general way. It is essential that the detachment of the scientific attitude should be something more than a superficial manifestation, but should apply to those parts below the surface as much as to those above. And I suggest that the constant failure to obtain



results should be blamed far more on the operator's mentality than on his subject's capabilities.

Yours etc.,

L. J. BENDIT, M.D., D.P.M.

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### THE ART OF PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

SIR,—Recent issues of the *Journal*, and the meeting addressed by Dr Bendit, have drawn attention to a division of opinion on the subject of laboratory tests. One school of thought dismisses these as 'silly'; the other inclines to question the genuineness of any phenomena, or of any sensitive, that cannot be tested with positive results in a laboratory.

It seems to me that the antithesis is a mistake, and that both kinds of work are necessary and complementary. There appears to be a confusion between the phenomenon in its natural context and the phenomenon in isolation—if it can be isolated. Is there not an art of Psychic Research, as well as a science? A word in a poem gets its magical effect from its context. You may isolate the word, you can study it with dictionaries and subject it to every philological test, and you will learn valuable things about it. The one thing you will not learn is why it produces a magical effect in the poem from which you have taken it. The magical eloquence of a dancer's hand in a ballet cannot be tested and accounted for by cutting off the hand and anatomising it in the laboratory.

A number of scientists, among them Whitehead, Jeans, and Sullivan, have been at pains to tell us that science is limited to describing the structure of things, and that it cannot measure—for instance—the quality of a work of art. In other words, there are phenomena that can be studied only in their context. They are essential parts of a whole, and their validity can never be tested in isolation from the whole of which they are a part.

I suggest therefore that, leaving aside considerations of courtesy and expediency, there is a factual basis for urging each side in the controversy to respect the aims and practices of the other. We have room for the artist as well as the scientist. In fact, we cannot get along without both.

Yours etc.,

L. A. G. STRONG

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### CONDITIONS FOR INVESTIGATION OF MEDIUMS

SIR,—Despite the statement made by some of our members in the March issue of the *Journal of Parapsychology* that so far in this country only two persons have been found who can acquire knowledge of facts other than by normal means, I assert that on the contrary dozens of mediums are displaying their powers day in and day out throughout the year. I have many times had clear proof of this.

At the Annual General Meeting I suggested that the Society should continue the enquiry into platform mediumship which was interrupted by the war. I wish to express my conviction of the importance of

conducting such investigations in an atmosphere suited to the temperament of the subject, and I hope the Council will study carefully Professor Rhine's article on 'Conditions Favouring Success in Psi Tests', and especially the following paragraph:

'When an especially gifted subject is involved or one whose claims are to be investigated, it is obviously necessary to begin with conditions that he believes will allow the capacity in question to be manifested. If need be, we can as a beginning let the subject himself lay down the conditions entirely. Then with successful demonstrations we can introduce one precaution after another always in cooperation with the subject until we arrive at adequate conditions. It is like the task of the naturalist studying a wild animal: we must first do what is necessary to keep in sight of the animal. As everyone who studies parapsychology well knows, there has been a great deal too much dogmatic laying-down of conditions in advance, on one assumption or another, with resultant waste of time and retardation of progress.'

In other words first study the medium in his own environment and patiently acquire his confidence. Then and then only try to secure his presence, at first under his own conditions, in your séance room.

Yours etc.,

B. ABDY COLLINS

#### THE SUBJECT'S VIEWPOINT

SIR,—The two reports on divining published in the May issue of the *Journal* suffer from incompleteness in the absence of any comment by the diviners concerned in the experiments.

In the case of all such reports, whether relating to divining, E.S.P. or other matters, their value would be added to by publishing the views of the functioning mediums, or by a note stating that they had failed to respond to an invitation to furnish a comment.

The same remark applies to published correspondence expressing conflicting opinions on recorded experiences (e.g. the letters of Drs Benditt and West, and of Mr Proctor and Mrs Heywood, also in the May number).

In fact, we hear far too little at first-hand of the view-point of mediums in concrete cases in which they are intimately concerned.

Yours etc.,

H. DE LAESSOE

#### A SIGNIFICANT BOOK TEST

SIR,—In the May issue of the *Journal* Mr Allen J. Sharp examines Mr Drayton Thomas's paper on 'A Significant Book Test'. The merits or demerits of Mr Thomas's paper will not be discussed in this letter. But the standards of criticism adopted by Mr Sharp deserve examination.

The Byron book contained marginal notes. Mr Sharp writes, 'It would be safe to say that in nine cases out of ten, such a book would also



have been used as a depository for letters and clippings.' Either (a) Mr Sharp is offering as a fact what is no more than a personal impression, or (b) having adopted the highest standards of psychical research, he means that if a book contains marginal notes the probability that it also contains letters and clippings is 0.90. In this case he possesses data to support his contention. Where are the data?

A little farther on he states, 'Since the most popular size of paper is quarto . . .' Mr Sharp is tantalising. How does he know this? If he has statistical information on the subject may we have it?

Again—'Most books published about this period, and especially collections of poems, have coloured flyleaves.' Which period? The date of publication of Mr Thomas's Byron is not disclosed in the report. And will Mr Sharp provide information on the relative frequency of coloured flyleaves?

On the statement by Feda (or Uncle Alfred) that 'Byrons are not usually illustrated', Mr Sharp observes that 'Most collections of poems at least bear a frontispiece'. Do they?

Finally, he tried an experiment. He 'selected at random a rather antiquated manual of geology which (he) recollected as having marginal notes'. This is evidently a contradiction in terms. Random selection implies a process of randomisation, and Mr Sharp's failure to use such a process indicates that his method was biased.

It is open to question whether, in applying a quantitative analysis to the evidence, Mr Sharp chose the method of criticism best suited to the case. However that may be, when criticism is made on a quantitative basis, it must, if it is to be of any significance, conform to the rigorous standards inherent in this particular method.

Yours etc.,

J. FRASER NICOL

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#### THE PSI PROCESSES

SIR,—May I be permitted to offer some criticisms of the paper by Drs Thouless and Wiesner in Vol. XLVIII of the *Proceedings* dated December 1947?

The case that these psychologists make is avowedly based upon the hypothesis of the separateness of mind and brain. I submit that the known facts of physiology make such a hypothesis untenable:

The more highly developed the brain, the fuller the degree of consciousness. A sufferer from G.P.I. loses his intelligence progressively. It is possible to destroy a 'mind' neurone by neurone. Memories can be extirpated from the 'mind', by extirpating a brain centre. The intelligence is seated in the association fibres of the frontal cortex, as the famous 'American Crowbar Case' proves conclusively. (The 'shin' is largely identical with the frontal cortex, as it receives impulses relating to perceptions and sends down muscular impulses.) All these facts, taken together, indicate fairly conclusively that mind and brain are identical except, of course, in a purely metaphysical sense—that is, we can look

on a mental process from the physiological or from the psychological point of view). They are incomparable with any theory of separateness.

There is one argument that is very cogent indeed. Softening of the occipital lobe may cause alexia, or word-blindness. The patient can see written words, but he cannot understand them. If the mind were separate from the brain, the patient would be able to understand the words also, for, by hypothesis, the mind is able to perceive them.

I am not for a moment disputing that there is a deeper part of the personality, that which is involved in the mystical experience which reality is independent of the brain; but Drs Thouless and Wiesner are obviously discussing the mind *as we know it*.

A word or two upon the entelechy: Neither the word itself, nor the theory, originated with Driesch. Beginning with Aristotle, under the name of *ἐντελέχεια*, it has passed through the hands of Albertus Magnus, Aquinas, Leibnitz and Hegel, Plotinus and Proclus. There may quite well be some truth in it, but not in the form in which Driesch understood it. To Driesch, the entelechy meant the subliminal mind, performing the processes of embryology by means of telepathy and materialisation. Driesch, himself an embryologist, said this almost in these very words when he was president of the S.P.R., and he offered the theory as a contribution to embryology. To-day, after twenty or more years of embryological research, his views are totally discredited. No embryologist believes them, or could possibly believe them. The publication of Joseph Needham's book, *Biochemistry and Morphogenesis*, has killed them forever. The growth of the embryo is plainly shown as the work of hormone.

I hope the authors of the paper will not object to my strictures, which are offered purely in the interests of truth.

Yours etc.,

BASIL SMITH

## REVIEWS

HEYDAY OF A WIZARD: DANIEL HOME, THE MEDIUM. By Jean Burton. Foreword by Harry Price. (London: Harrap. 1948. 244 pp. Illus. 10s. 6d.)

'To point a moral, go to extremes' says the well-known maxim. Students of the physical phenomena of psychical research should study the extreme case of D. D. Home's mediumship, and in so doing will find this biography of great assistance and a ready reference to the various phases of Home's career.

The literature on Home is profuse, including two autobiographical books written by himself, two biographies written after his death by his second wife, papers and articles in the S.P.R. *Proceedings* and *Journal*, and a mass of references to his mediumship in *Memoirs* and *Reminiscences* of the time.

Jean Burton has drawn copiously from this literature, and tells her tale so capably and entertainingly that not only should her book find a place on the shelves of all students of psychical research, but it can be read by the general reader as an absorbing tale depicting London and Continental society and the Royal Courts of Europe in their relation to the cult



Spiritualism during the latter half of the nineteenth century. For D. D. Home took two continents—America and Europe—by storm. He claimed not only as his clientele but as his personal friends the *élite* and celebrities of many lands, and gave literally scores of sittings a year. 'By the end of the '60's there was scarcely a man or woman of note who had not viewed the marvels of his séances or could not consult a friend who had,' says Miss Burton of the London scene.

Yet he never suffered a serious, first-hand exposure, in spite of the two features which make his mediumship unique: he invariably sat as one of the circle of sitters in full view of all, and his sittings were not held in darkness but in varying degrees of light.<sup>1</sup>

Very different in quantity and quality of mediumship was the scene when, compared to our own lean years. And very different the standards of investigation! The proven unreliability of the average, untrained witness would allow us to dismiss the greater part of the copious testimony to the enormous range of Home's mediumship, were it not for the examination of Home by the eminent scientist Mr (later Sir) William Crookes, already at the time a Fellow of the Royal Society. Crookes's 'Researches into Spiritualism' tells of his detailed investigations and complete belief in Home's genuineness as a result—a belief shared by other savants such as Lord Crawford (the Master of Lindsay), Cromwell Varley, F.R.S., and others. 'Deception,' wrote Varley to Prof Tyndall after investigation of Home carried out in his (Varley's) own home, 'was impossible.' An eminent chemist, writing in the *Birmingham Morning News* at that time, sums up the situation as follows: 'Either a new and most extraordinary natural force has been discovered, or some very eminent men, specially trained in rigid physical investigation, have been the victims of a most marvellous, unprecedented and inexplicable physical delusion. I say unprecedented because, although we have records of many popular delusions of similar kind and equal magnitude, and speculative delusions among the learned, I can cite no instance of skilful experimental experts being utterly, egregiously and repeatedly deceived by the mechanical action of experimental test apparatus carefully constructed and used by themselves.'

For all that, psychical researchers of to-day do not accept Home's phenomena as 'proven'; and the reasons for this abiding scepticism would entail an exhaustive survey of surely one of the most absorbing studies upon earth.

A very few unimportant misprints in the American edition (New York, Knopf, 1944) have been corrected in the English version. A serious error, however, has been overlooked (p. 225 of the English version), where, after Home's marriage in October 1871 to the aristocratic Mlle Julie de Gloumeline (the Czar of Russia sending a sapphire and diamond ring with his felicitations as a present), their daughter is described as being born 6 months later in April 1872, instead of in the autumn of that year.

K. M. G.

<sup>1</sup> Count Perovsky exhaustively examines the most serious of the second-hand exposures in S.P.R. *Journal* XV, 274 ff, and *Proceedings* XXXIX, 247; and the Hallucination Theory in *Proceedings* XXI, 436 ff.

THE RELIGION OF THE MODERN SCIENTIST (NEO-MATERIALISM). By S. W. Tromp. (Leiden: A. W. Sijthoff's Uitgeversmaatschappij N. V. 1947. xxiv, 480 pp.)

The view most generally expressed in this country at the present time concerning the relation between the phenomena of psychical research and science is that the present scientific framework cannot include these phenomena. Professor Tromp has made an interesting contribution from the opposite viewpoint. The essence of his so-called neo-materialist view is the conclusion that both organic life and the inorganic non-living world are governed by the same general laws, and in support of this thesis a general account of the behaviour of matter and of the development of life to the atomic period is given. Attention is directed to the similarities in the behaviour of living matter and inorganic crystals, Tromp holding that all the fundamental processes in living matter can be paralleled by crystallisation phenomena. A very considerable quantity of factual matter is incorporated in developing these views, and the general reader may find difficulty in following much of the discussion, which frequently goes into some detail and introduces difficult concepts with very little explanation.

Psychical researchers may be interested in Professor Tromp's tentative explanations of the most important parapsychological phenomena. Telepathy is ascribed to the propagation of electromagnetic waves from one brain to another, the well-known electrical properties of the brain being mentioned in support of this hypothesis, and the experiments of Koopman and Franke on the encephalograms of persons in trance, which showed an enormous increase of amplitude and a considerable change in the Fourier analysis of the curves. True psychometry is considered to be due to complex induced electromagnetic fields in the object used, although telepathy may be the chief source of information in most psychometric séances. Prophecy of the future from the neo-materialistic viewpoint of total causality becomes comparable with psychometry of the past, but the development of this reasoning leads to dubious ground in discussion of the scientific value of palmistry and astrology. A lengthy section is devoted to Tromp's original work on the movements of the divining rod which he considers to be due to complex electromagnetic phenomena, the rod being able to detect magnetic field gradients as low as 0.001 oersted/cm. His conclusions are, however, often at variance in detail with those of other investigators of divining, and it is clear that much further work is required in this field. The divining rod combined with the human body is stated to be an instrument exceeding in sensitiveness all physical instruments.

The suggestion is made that the physiological processes of a medium in trance differ from those in normal persons, and enable an organic substance to be secreted through the pores which together with the electromagnetic fields surrounding the body may account for telekinetic phenomena, but this is advanced only cautiously in view of the prevalence of charlatanry in these matters. The phenomena of phantoms and hauntings are considered to be largely imaginative, arising through a lack of critical observational capacity on the part of the observers, which may be stimulated by such normal effects as the formation of spontaneous



flammable phosphine from interaction of disintegrating bones and traces of acid in the soil, the self-ignition of methane containing phosphine, sulphiferous bacteria and natural electrical discharges. These various suggestions are in line with the earlier views of Podmore, but Tromp also considers that telepathy and permanent induced electromagnetic fields must be postulated in the case of some local phantom phenomena.

In the descriptive portions a good deal of controversial work is described, such as that of Pfeiffer on crystallisation, Gurwitsch on mitogenetic rays, and (Mrs) Kolisko on lunar effects and dilution effects, without its being quite clear that such work has not been generally accepted by scientists, and in some cases is definitely regarded as erroneous. In view of the great quantity of factual information given, it seems a pity that the obvious work described is not more clearly characterised as such.

A. J. B. ROBERTSON

OXFORD ESSAYS ON PSYCHOLOGY. By William Brown, D. M. (Oxon), D.Sc. (Lond.), F.R.C.P. (London: Wm. Heinemann Medical Books Ltd. 1948. viii, 148 pp. 10s. 6d.)

These seven essays were given by Dr Brown as lectures to his students at Oxford. Written as they are with a happy gift for summarising complex material, and touching on many and varied subjects, these lectures should be welcome, both to the reader who is beginning to be interested in psychological thought, and to the specialist who will value judgments and conclusions based on over thirty years of practical experience in the world of psychology and psychiatry.

The subject matter is wide, ranging from 'General Psychological Principles' to 'Social Psychology', and the more specialised field of 'The Psychology of Medicine'.

The first lecture, 'General Psychological Principles', can naturally deal only briefly with so wide a subject, but holds much of interest, and shows Dr Brown's always sympathetic insight.

The lecture which deals with social psychology, especially that on 'The Gregarious Instinct and the Group Mind' (with special reference to Nazi Germany and the paranoid character of its leaders), has an added interest as being an early application of the insight given by psychoanalysis into political and racial events. The essay is written with a moderation which reflects Dr Brown's attitude throughout, and gives a convincing picture of a nation suffering from the regressions and perversions familiar in individual psychological troubles.

One wishes that when writing on group psychology Dr Brown might have speculated on the possibility (a possibility opened up by research into telepathic phenomena) that where gregarious emotions are taking place, there might be telepathy between members of the group. But Dr Brown does not seem to be much tempted by the type of speculation which has no scientific recommendation. No reference is made to the phenomena investigated by psychic research in this collection of essays, but in the essay on 'General Psychological Principles' Dr Brown writes:

'But we do not know of mind apart from body. Whether it is only

in this life that mind is indissolubly wedded to body is an open question. The individual mind may survive bodily death (I myself think this probable on moral grounds), but there is not enough *scientific* evidence to prove it. We may theorise, but from the point of view of strict science we cannot build upon such theorising. What we can build upon is what we know, and we know life when we see it, and life, as I have said, is fundamentally good. It implies an organism which has established itself and is able to maintain itself in face of difficulties in relation to its environment, and even to turn those difficulties to its own use.'

This considered optimism is characteristic of Dr Brown's thought.

In the essay on 'Psychology and Medicine' Dr Brown gives a summary of the days of Mesmer, Braid, Bernheim and Charcot, and discusses theories and methods in the treatment by suggestion and hypnosis. Dr Brown was himself early in the more modern field of psychological medicine and analysis, and relates some of his own experiences and conclusions in the treatment of 5000 shell-shocked soldiers who passed through his hands in the First World War.

As treatment, he came to the conclusion, in agreement now with the general consensus of medical opinion, that hypnotism is only justified, and at its most useful, in cases of loss of memory; and that in by far the greater number of such cases the suggestion of sleep and relaxation should be substituted.

Students of psychical research who are working on experimental lines will be interested to hear Dr Brown's experiences and conclusions with regard to relaxation. It will probably be in the lecture on 'Recuperation and Relaxation' that they will find matter with most relevance to their pursuit. In this lecture Dr Brown touches on the subject of Yoga, and gives a necessarily brief summary. He refers to a book which seems to be the first scientific evaluation of Yoga (*Yoga, a Scientific Evaluation* by K. T. Behanan). This author spent two years in India in active practice of Yoga, and later carried out some careful physiological research when he returned to the U.S.A. on the effects of the oxygenation of the blood due to deep breathing and posture.

If relaxation of the active mind and body is, as some may conclude, a necessary condition for the functioning of the unconscious mind (i.e. the paranormal aspect of it now called E.S.P.) every technique for achieving relaxation must be worth investigation. In the psychiatric world, where the aim is mental healing, attention and research is directed now to the physical means of promoting mental change. So, in the even newer field of planned E.S.P. experiments, it seems that the attention research may be turning to the exploration of physical conditions.

If the reader may be disappointed that Dr Brown has no essay on psychical research, he should get over his disappointment and allow himself to be beguiled into ranging over these other but neighbouring fields with such an interesting and experienced guide.

I. J.



AS ICH, DER TRAUM, DER TOD. By Professor Dr Max Dessoir. (Stuttgart: Ferd. Enke. 1947. 185 pp.)

This short book is the last work of our late Corresponding Member, the distinguished philosopher Max Dessoir, whose death was recorded in the *Journal* for September 1947. Writing when over eighty years old, after an interest in psychical research extending for more than sixty years, he regretfully expresses the view that little progress has been made towards establishing proof of survival, and that such evidence as has transpired is for the present inconclusive. As his own life draws towards its end, he feels an obligation to place on record this result of his studies, and the more so since he believes that—as in 1917, when he published his first book—the effect of the recent, as of the earlier, world war, is likely to be an increase in superstitious beliefs and a widespread indifference to objective judgment on these questions.

This is a readable little book; although to the present reviewer at least it belies its title. The Ego, Dreams, and Death suggest a discussion of essentially psychological or psycho-analytical concepts and topics, which nowhere appear in the book (apart from one mention in reference to multiple personality). The book is in fact a short and compact survey of the whole field of psychical research, dealing in two sections with physical and psychical evidence of survival and in a third with alternative explanations of the phenomena.

Although the subject-matter is so condensed, a very fair and clear presentation is given, with numerous examples from the literature of the best-known writers on the subject, and from the *Proceedings* of the S.P.R. and the A.S.P.R., of all the various types of phenomena which have been attributed to departed spirits. The book is throughout informed both by the writer's lively interest in the problem as well as by his natural good sense. His condemnation of some of the excesses, in triviality or ludicrousness, of so-called evidential phenomena is never bitter; and he shows the true scientific spirit in the 'irresistible attraction' which, as he says, this blank page in the book of science exercises on him. In the face of the little that we can learn at present, however, to him 'doubt becomes duty'.

J. R.

THE JOURNAL OF PARAPSYCHOLOGY, Vol. XII, No. 1, March 1948.  
(Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press.)

This number of the *Journal of Parapsychology* contains the first contributions to an interesting series of opinions on a research programme in parapsychology for the next ten years. Those whose contributions are printed in this number are: Ehrenwald, Hart, Gardner Murphy, Pratt, Price, Miss Reeves, Soal, Tyrrell and West. It will be seen that the English S.P.R. is generously represented. There seems to be a considerable measure of agreement as to immediate objectives of research. A number of the contributors emphasise the importance of discovering means of increasing the rates of scoring of ordinary subjects: by drugs, hypnosis or mental exercises. Several consider that a fruitful line of research is the investigation of personality differences related to parapsychological success. There seems to be some difference of opinion as

to the value of the investigation of psychokinesis as a research project. Psychometry, survival and precognition are also mentioned as subjects for future investigation.

Elizabeth McMahan and Joan Lauer record results of experiments on extra-sensory perception when the agent and cards were in an unknown locality. There was no significant deviation from chance expectation in total hits, but a marginally significant decline effect was found. It might have been worth while to have done a series for comparison with the same agent and experimenter when the location was not unknown. Further combinations of conditions suggest themselves, such as a comparison of known and unknown location under PC conditions, the effect of location of the cards (under PC conditions) being unknown to the agent as well as to the experimenter, etc.

Professor Rhine contributes a valuable article on conditions favourable to success in psi tests. The rate of success amongst ordinary subjects has been higher at Duke University than any that we have found here. It is well that we should learn all we can of how they do it there. British workers may have concentrated sometimes too much on rigidity of conditions while losing sight of the necessity to establish conditions leading to fruitful results. But it is to be noted that Whately Carington in his drawing experiments also got better results from Duke University participants than from those over here. So the difference may be not only in methods but also in the subjects. It may be due to a tradition of success having established itself at Duke; if so, we may hope to establish a similar tradition here. It may be a difference in climate, diet, or a number of other possible variables. Clearly there is something to be found out about this difference.

R. H. T.

A CASEBOOK FOR SURVIVAL. Collected and arranged by A. P. Baird. (London: Psychic Press. 282 pp. 10s. 6d.)

In this sequel to his earlier book *A Hundred Cases for Survival* Baird has collected a second hundred well-known cases which he considers provide evidence indicating survival after death. He describes the book as an attempt to meet the requirements of the 'sceptical and critical' and 'though it may fail to satisfy their canons of evidence, nevertheless may rouse some curiosity on the enigma of survival'. The cases are presented under eight headings—Dreams, Haunted Houses, Apparitions, Death-Bed Visions, Automatic Writing, Trance Phenomena, Direct Voice, and Materialisation—each prefaced by the compiler's commentary on the various hypotheses which have been put forward.

TALKS WITH ELIZABETHANS. By Percy Allen. (London: Rider. 216 pp. illus. 15s.)

Mr Allen's book contains a record of communications purporting to come from William Shakespeare, Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford, and Francis Bacon. The scripts were produced by automatic writing in sittings with Mrs Hester Dowden in 1944 and 1945. Mr Allen had been for many years previously a leading exponent of the view that the greater part of Shakespeare's plays, and also the Sonnets, were



the work of the Earl of Oxford. Mrs Dowden's scripts confirmed his view. He does not believe that the information was derived from his own subconscious mind nor from Mrs Dowden but that it came directly from discarnate Elizabethan intelligences. He considers, however, that the communications were facilitated, on his own part by a previous Elizabethan incarnation, and in the case of Mrs Dowden by her connexion, through her father, with Shakespearean scholarship. Nowhere in the scripts is verifiable information given which could not have been available by normal means to either medium or sitter.

ROSEMARY FOR REMEMBRANCE. By Clifford Bax. (London: Frederick Muller. 1948. 207 pp. Illus. 12s. 6d.)

Among these essays and reminiscences written with Mr Bax's usual urbanity and elegance of style is an abbreviated account of sittings with Mrs Pamela Nash. At two of these, objects associated with E. V. Lucas, who had died about eight months previously, were given to the medium, and Mr Bax is satisfied that she had no means of knowing anything about their history. Much of the information given appears from Mr Bax's comments to be strikingly applicable to Mr Lucas, but it is, of course, impossible to form a considered judgment without access to the verbatim record of the sittings.

### *Books re-issued*

GRADES OF SIGNIFICANCE. By G. N. M. Tyrrell. First published 1930. Rider. 12s. 6d.

The following books, published under the auspices of the Society in 1938, have been re-issued by G. Bell & Sons at 3s. 6d. each. They may be obtained from the Society (postage 3d. per volume) or from booksellers.

EVIDENCE OF PERSONAL SURVIVAL FROM CROSS-CORRESPONDENCES. By H. F. Saltmarsh.

EVIDENCE OF PURPOSE. By Z. Richmond.

FOREKNOWLEDGE. By H. F. Saltmarsh.

GHOSTS AND APPARITIONS. By W. H. Salter.

### *English Edition*

Faber & Faber have just published an English edition of J. B. Rhine's *The Reach of The Mind* (188 pp., 10s. 6d.).

## NOTICES TO MEMBERS

### CONSULTATION OF OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

IN view of the gratifying increase in the Society's membership, it is desirable to inform members how they can best consult the officers of the Society.

### *General Policy*

Correspondence on matters of general policy should be addressed to one of the Joint Hon. Secretaries.

*Administration, Library, and Publications*

Letters concerning the details of administration, including the borrowing of Library books and ordering of publications, should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Horsell.

*Research, Reports of Cases, etc.*

Reports of sittings with mediums and of spontaneous cases that appear to be evidential, and general correspondence concerning research, should be addressed to the Research Officer.

The two members of the Society whose names and addresses are given below have kindly consented to deal with any letters addressed to them relating to incidents or experiences that seem to the writers to be subjective rather than of evidential value :

Miss K. Richmond,  
80 Regent's Park Road, N.W.1.

Miss H. Harding,  
57 Holland Park, W.11.

These two members and any of the officers of the Society can also be seen *by appointment*. They are glad to extend these facilities of consultation to members and non-members alike.

## PAPERS SUBMITTED FOR PUBLICATION IN PROCEEDINGS

The Committee of Reference and Publication wish it to be known that papers submitted for publication in *Proceedings* should be typewritten and sent in duplicate. This is necessary to reduce as far as possible the time taken by circulating the paper to all members of the Committee.

## BACK NUMBERS WANTED

The Society will be glad to buy copies of *Proceedings*, Vol. XLVI, Part 167, 'Experiments in Precognitive Telepathy' by S. G. Soal and K. M. Goldney.

Any other back numbers of *Proceedings* or *Journal* which members no longer require (especially issues of the *Journal* from 1942-5) will also be gratefully received (no payment).

W. H. SALTER  
DENYS PARSONS  
*Joint Hon. Secretaries*

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## MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL

THE 437th Meeting of the Council was held at 31 Tavistock Square, London, W.C.1, on Wednesday, 14 April 1948, at 5 p.m., the President, Mr W. H. Salter, in the chair. The Minutes of the last Meeting of the Council were read and signed as correct. Twenty-one new Members were elected. Their names and addresses are given below.

The 438th Meeting of the Council was held at 31 Tavistock Square, London, W.C.1, on Saturday, 8 May 1948, at 2.30 p.m., the President, Mr W. H. Salter, in the chair. The Minutes of the last Meeting of the Council were read and signed as correct. Nine new Members were elected. Their names and addresses are given below.

## MEETINGS OF THE SOCIETY

The 198th Private Meeting of the Society was held in the Society's Rooms on Friday, 30 April 1948, at 8.15 p.m., when a lecture entitled 'Where and What is the Mind' was given by Dr Robert Eisler.

The 199th Private Meeting of the Society was held in the Society's Rooms on Saturday, 5 June 1948, at 3 p.m., when a lecture on 'Hypnosis and Psychical Research' was given by Mr Eric Cuddon.

## NEW MEMBERS

*(Elected 14 April 1948)*

BARNES, P. R., 12 Hyde Park Place, London, W.2.

BELL, Miss M., M.A., 2 Waterfall Road, Westcliff, Johannesburg, South Africa.

BRET, Dr P. THOMAS, 3 Travissa do Jasmin, Lisbon, Portugal.

ELLIOTT, S. R., 99 Chaldon Way, Coulsdon, Surrey.

LAUNCE, Colonel E. DE L., Carrack Gladden, Binkham Hill, Yelverton, S. Devon.

LITTOCK, E., 240 Randwick Park Road, Plymstock, S. Devon.

HAMILTON, Sir FREDERIC H., Russet House, Tadworth, Surrey.

HENRY, A., 82 Mytton Street, Moss Side, Manchester 15.

HILL, R. H. K., M.A., Canister Farm, Great Dunham, King's Lynn, Norfolk.

HYAM, A., 9 Parkland Avenue, Langley, Bucks.

KNOWLES, F. W., Y.M.C.A., 643 Fulham Road, London, S.W.6.

LANDER, H. C., 402 Osage Street, Leavenworth, Kansas, U.S.A.

LEE, Mrs J. OWEN, 91 Sheridan Square, Evanston, Illinois, U.S.A.

MARTINEAU, R. C., Evans's, Eton, Windsor, Berks.

PIPPARD, Dr J. S., 97 Oxford Gardens, London, W.10.

RYOR, Mrs B. H., 3 Westbourne Grove Terrace, London, W.2.

RYAN, Mrs NORMAN A., 932 Judson Avenue, Evanston, Illinois, U.S.A.

THEUSNER, Mrs G., 32 High Street, Redhill, Surrey.

TURNER, J. GREENWOOD, 6 The Avenue, Datchet, Bucks.

ULLMAN, Dr MONTAGUE, 116 Rutledge Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11, U.S.A.  
WILKINS, Dr F. J., 11 Powder Mill Lane, Waltham Abbey, Essex.

*(Elected 8 May 1948)*

BILLAUD, G., 24 Rue de Londres, Paris IXe, France.  
BUDGEN, Mrs E. S., 5 Chester Street, Edinburgh.  
GILL, ROBERT, 3 Sydney House, Woodstock Road, London, W.4.  
HERZBERG, Miss I., 137 Finchley Road, London, N.W.3.  
HITCHINGS, I., 57 Manor Road, Manselton, Swansea.  
NAGY, Dr LOUIS, Manor Lodge, Chesham, Bucks.  
SCRUTTON, Miss M., 55 Park Town, Oxford.  
SWAIN, Miss F. M., High Woods, Chinnor Hill, Oxon.  
SYMONDS, Miss M.A., 52 Court Lane, Erdington, Birmingham 23.

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